

**MINUTES FOR January 8, 2009**  
**MEETING OF THE PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY**  
**COMMITTEE**

**Members Present:** Erwin Mack, Chair; Alyce Ortuzar; Charles Kines, MNCPPC; Jack Strausman; Lt. Ronald Smith, MCPD; James D'Andrea; Colleen Mitchell; Ben Stutz, representing Councilmember Ervin; Al Roshdieh, representing Art Holmes

**Members Absent:** Bill Bronrott, Vice Chairman; John Howley; Steve Friedman; Ken Hartman, B-CC Regional Service Center; Peter Moe, MSHA, MHSO; Alan Migdall; John Britton, Maryland Municipal League; Doris DePaz

**County Staff:** Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Tom Pogue; Larry McGoogin Safe Routes to School Coordinator; Al Roshdieh; Fred Lees

**Guests:** None

**Agenda Items:**

1. Introductions
2. Committee Business
3. Council Bill 35-08 – Speed Camera Revenue for FR Apparatus
4. Piney Branch Road – High Incidence Area Remediation
5. Meeting with County Executive – February 12, 7pm
6. Recap on Discussion of Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee – Mission and Future
7. Other Pedestrian Safety Activities and Issues

**Item 1: Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Chairman Erwin Mack. He emphasized the need to start meetings promptly. Dunckel announced that the new members had been approved by the County Council; the committee could now officially welcome its newest members: Colleen Mitchell, Jack Strausman and Doris DePaz. Unfortunately, DePaz had called this afternoon apologizing for having to miss the meeting due to her being ill.

**Item 2: Committee Business**

Updated membership lists were distributed. There were no meeting of the Steering Committee or the Implementation Group to report on. Activities and agendas from January would be discussed at the next meeting. The next Implementation Group meeting was scheduled for January 14; the Steering Committee meeting will be held on January 28, prior to the CountyStat review scheduled for January 30.

**Item 4: Piney Branch Road – High Incidence Area Remediation**

Mack requested that Item 4 be discussed before item 3, since key members of the Committee (Ben Stutz) had not yet arrived and were needed for that discussion. Fred Lees, MCDOT Project

Manager, began by giving an overview of the report he had just received. Distributing hard copies was not feasible, but Lees said he would look into putting it on our website. MCDOT is very pleased with the final report from our consultants. A road audit was conducted on October 21 and 22, 2008, at all times of day. A cross-functional team of 8 members went out and performed the audit. Looking at 9 zones, a whole series of recommendations were made. Three primary areas of concern were the Northeast section of Piney Branch, east of University at the Latino Market where there was a lot of midblock crossing and turning movements; at Barrons with confusing driveway access points, and east of Carroll where there is heavy transit use with few crossing locations. The recommendations were handed out to the committee in the Meeting Packet.

Before any work is done, a pedestrian survey is being conducted. A copy of the survey to be administered this month was distributed in the Meeting Packet. CASA is administering the survey that will be in English and in Spanish. 600 surveys will be completed. Doris DePaz is working on administering the survey for CASA. Dunckel discussed the specifics of the survey instrument. Colleen Mitchell suggested that something should be added to questionnaire about what language they preferred to receive information, as well as what methods were best to receive information to them. Mack noted that Prince Georges County uses radio to reach the Latino community; perhaps we could work with them on disseminating information via shared Radio.

Mack asked about current activities; Lees responded that State is now modifying intersection to eliminate free channelized right turns, forcing people to stop. Extra overhead signs? Signs now too far from Crossroads area, says Mack. Jeff Wentz (MDSHA) has agreed to relocate the signs to better locations.

Alyce Ortuzar expressed concerns that when the white cross signal goes on at a pedestrian signal, it quickly changes to flashing red, with cars interpreting that flashing red as meaning they have the right of way. She suggested that the white walk signal should be extended with only a short flashing red signal. Staff explained about State and National standards that set the timing intervals. Dunckel pointed out that the Pedestrian Safety Initiative calls for the re-evaluation of all County pedestrian-signal timings. The Committee agreed that Count-down pedestrian heads are the answer.

### **Item 3: Council Bill 35-08 – Speed Camera Revenue for Fire & Rescue Apparatus**

Mack introduced Item 3 by citing the need to develop testimony to be give to the full County Council on January 13. Dunckel and Ben Stutz were asked to brief the Committee on the issue. Dunckel outlined the history he was aware of. On November 18, just before the last PTSAC meeting, MCDOT was informed that the County Council was proposing Bill 35-08, that would dedicate 50% of all speed camera revenues and red light camera revenues to the purchase of Fire and Rescue Equipment, 15% to traffic safety, and then give 35% to the Pedestrian Safety Initiative, of which 25% of the 35% was to go to municipalities with speed cameras, but no police departments, only one jurisdiction meets that criteria; Pooleville. This was a condition for Mike Knapp (Upcounty) to support Bill 35-08.

That was problematic because it meant that 9% of all speed and red light camera revenues would be going to Poolesville; only 26% would go to pedestrian safety in the rest of the County. Dunckel distributed the spreadsheet that displayed 3 pedestrian collisions had occurred in Poolesville since 2004, compared to the large number of crashes everywhere else. The Council session planned for early December was deferred to the full Council on January 13 and to the Public Safety Committee on February 5.

MCDOT's concern is that the County Executive had originally proposed providing \$4.8 million to fully fund the Pedestrian Safety Initiative from the Speed Camera revenues. To fully fund the initiative may take more than the \$4.8 million. But whatever it takes, it is likely to take more than the 26% now proposed by the County Council. Two additional considerations: the State enabling legislation stipulates that speed camera revenues are to be used for related public safety, including pedestrian safety, and must not supplant existing program, but must be new programs/funding. Vice Chairman Bronrott had asked the States Attorney General for a determination on whether the Council's proposed use of speed cameras was legal. The original finding was no, but just this week, a new determination was issued that it was legal.

Stutz explained that the original intent of Councilmember Ervin was to keep the pedestrian safety initiative fully-funded, by subtracting from the proposed full funding (\$4.8 million) what had already been allocated to pedestrian safety in FY09. That is why they supported the original 35% pedestrian safety designation. They were not aware of the last minute amendment to divert 9% to Poolesville and leave only 26% for the entire County. Al Roshdieh pointed out that the original estimate of \$4.8 million was a very rough estimate, and that the final costs may not come out to that number. Stutz says everything is still on the table, with room to discuss actual program costs.

Roshdieh suggests that the Council should not act until the County Executive has a chance to submit a budget with projected program costs. Stutz responded that the timing of the legislation was driven by the Fire and Rescue Apparatus, not the pedestrian safety programs. Ervin's motivation was the sure, in tough budgetary times, that the pedestrian safety programs had a secure funding source.

Mack will draft some testimony for the Council session on January 13. Alan Migdall has already started working on some language for testimony. Mack requested input from MCDOT on the important issues.

#### **Item 5: Meeting with County Executive – February 12, 7:00 pm**

The County Executive will meet with representatives of the Pedestrian Safety Committee on February 12, at 7:00 pm. Mack would like to know who from the Committee would like to attend, and what issues the Committee wants to raise with the Executive. Dunckel agreed to send out a notice to the Committee letting them know they may attend this session and to let us know what points should be brought up. Dunckel explained that these meetings are for the County Executive to reach out to the Committees, and that County staff are to have a minimal role.

## **Item 6: Recap on Discussion of Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee – Mission and Future**

Mack discussed the role of the new chairman, and reviewed the responsibilities of the committee as described in its enabling legislation. Chuck Kines suggested that the committee should receive a copy of the original 2002 Blue Ribbon Panel Report. Kines also emphasized that the Committee's agenda should be driven by the citizen voting members not by the staff of the members representing specific interests. Mack suggested that the Committee submit agenda item requests to Dunckel and him. Mack and Dunckel will meet before each meeting to set the agendas.

## **Item 6: Other Pedestrian Safety Activities and Issues:**

Clean up of Road Debris Following Auto Collisions- deferred with Steve Friedman being absent. Pedestrian Safety Action Plan – Dunckel requested that the Committee provide MCDOT with comments before we finalize the plan and the budget. Dunckel reported that World Remembrance Day/March for Pedestrian Safety-Nov.22 had 25 participants and that the parade had been a wonderful experience that we would like to duplicate next year. Mack had a similar good experience with his Santa in the Crosswalks at Takoma Langley on December 3, with over 30 volunteers participating in the event.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10. The next meeting is scheduled for February 5, 2009, at 7:00 pm in the EOB, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room,

Minutes by Jeff Dunckel

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